AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The claims have been amended as set forth in the following listing of the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes,

wherein an interval between the electrodes becomes narrower from an upstream side to a downstream side with respect to a water current flowing through an inside ~~a space is secured between the electrodes and an inner surface~~ of a casing of the ion elution unit.

2. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:~~The ion elution unit according to claim 1,~~

~~wherein~~ terminals that are so laid as to run from the electrodes out of a casing of the ion elution unit, the terminals being disposed on an upstream side with respect to a water current flowing through an inside of the casing~~an interval between the electrodes becomes narrower from an upstream side to a downstream side with respect to a water current flowing through an inside of a casing of the ion elution unit~~.

3. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:~~The ion elution unit according to claim 2,~~

~~wherein~~ terminals that are so laid as to run from the electrodes out of a casing of ~~the casing of~~ the ion elution unit, the terminals being ~~are~~ disposed on an upstream side ~~the upstream side~~ with respect to a water current ~~the water current~~ flowing through an inside of ~~the inside of~~

the casing, and a supporting portion for supporting downstream-side parts of the electrodes being formed on an ~~is formed on the~~ inner surface of the casing.

4. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising: ~~The ion elution unit according to claim 2,~~

~~wherein~~ terminals laid from the electrodes being so formed as to penetrate a bottom wall of a casing of the ion elution unit and protrude downward~~a water inflow port and a water outflow port are formed in the casing of the ion elution unit, and the water outflow port is given a smaller cross-sectional area than the water inflow port~~.

5. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising: ~~The ion elution unit according to claim 2,~~

~~wherein~~ a water inflow port and a water outflow port formed in a casing of the ion elution unit,

wherein the water outflow port is given a larger cross-sectional area than the water inflow port~~a cross-sectional area of an interior space of the casing gradually decreases from the upstream side to the downstream side~~.

6. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising: ~~The ion elution unit according to claim 1,~~

~~wherein~~ a casing,

wherein a cross-sectional area of an interior space of the casing of the ion elution unit gradually decreases from an upstream side to a downstream side~~a water inflow port and a water outflow port are formed in the casing of the ion elution unit, and the water outflow port is located in a lowest position within an interior space of the casing~~.

7. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising: ~~The ion elution unit according to claim 1,~~

~~wherein~~a water inflow port and a water outflow port formed in a casing of the ion elution unit,

wherein the water outflow port is located in a lowest position within an interior space of the casing~~, of the electrodes, any positive electrode is made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The ion elution unit according to any one of claims 1 to 7~~claim 1~~,

wherein, of the electrodes, a positive electrode is ~~both positive and negative electrodes are~~ made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy.

9. (Currently Amended) The ion elution unit according any one of claims 1 to 7~~to claim 8~~,

wherein, of the electrodes, both positive and negative electrodes are made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy ~~polarities of the electrodes are reversed periodically~~.

10. (Currently Amended) An appliance, comprising: ~~comprising~~

the ion elution unit according to claim 9~~claim 8~~,

wherein polarities of the electrodes are reversed periodically~~the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to water~~.

11. (Currently Amended) An appliance, comprising: ~~comprising~~

the ion elution unit according to claim 9,

wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to water.

12. (Currently Amended) An appliance comprising: ~~The appliance according to claim 10,~~

the ion elution unit according to claim 10,

wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to water~~appliance is a washing machine~~.

13. (Previously Presented) The appliance according to claim 11,

wherein the appliance is a washing machine.

14. (Currently Amended) The appliance according to claim 12~~An ion elution unit that generates metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes~~,

wherein the appliance is a washing machine~~terminals that are so laid as to run from the electrodes out of a casing of the ion elution unit are formed in a position inward of ends of the electrodes located on an upstream side with respect to a water current flowing through an inside of the casing~~.

15. (Canceled)
16. (Canceled)
17. (Canceled)
18. (Canceled)
19. (Canceled)
20. (Canceled)
21. (Canceled)
22. (Canceled)
23. (Canceled)
24. (Canceled)